



2-year-old Vermonters Graduating from Innovative Home Visiting Program



For Immediate Release: May 28, 2015

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BURLINGTON – Keeping a mortarboard on a 2-year-old graduate can be a challenge, but parents and their toddlers may give it a shot on June 2. Eleven children and their parents from Franklin and Caledonia counties who were among the first to benefit from two-year Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) program will graduate.

NFP serves pregnant women, mothers and their babies until the child's second birthday. The Health Department partnered with five home health agencies statewide. Currently, 220 women are participating.

The June 2 graduation ceremonies are 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Franklin County Home Health at the Church of the Rock in St. Albans; and 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Caledonia Home Health Care and Hospice, the Cornucopia Community Meal Site, in Newport.

"The program has exceeded our expectations on every level," said Breena Holmes, MD, director of Maternal & Child Health for the Health Department. "First-time mothers are very open to advice and guidance and the nurses, the mothers, and these communities have invested in the future success of these children."

Young mothers are often seeking information to guide them through pregnancy amidst complicated and stressful family and social lives. Family and spousal support is often absent, the young women are facing financial stress, housing insecurity, lack of transportation, and some are working to complete high school, their GED, or college.

Thirteen nurses from five home health agencies: Franklin County Home Health; Northern Counties Health Care; Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice; Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice; and the Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice of Vermont and New Hampshire have taken a leadership role in the program.

"The nurses provide much more than the information clients sought when enrolling in NFP. The nurses are reliable, trustworthy, and knowledgeable and a constant support system in their lives," Dr. Holmes said. "Many of the nurses went above-and-beyond in responding to their needs."

"We're looking forward to many more graduation parties for our NFP families," she added.

The program is federally funded through the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), which is part of HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration).

For more information on the program, or how to sign up visit:

<http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/locations/Vermont>

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